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Docket No. 1232-4676**REMARKS*****Status of the Claims***

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the instant application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Upon entry of this Amendment, Claims 1-72 and 74-89 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4, 14, 17, 20, 21, 32-37, 39-50, 58, 62, 65-72, 74, 75, 82, 83 and 86 have been amended, and claim 73 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. In addition, claims 87-89 have been added. Applicant believes that these changes introduce no new matter. Entry and consideration of this Amendment are respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner states on page 2 of the Office Action that the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) submitted on May 20, 2004 was not considered because it failed to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2). During a telephone conference between the undersigned and the Examiner on December 3, 2004, the Examiner stated that this IDS actually complies with all USPTO requirements. Accordingly, the Examiner agreed to consider this IDS. Applicant respectfully requests that an initialed copy of the form PTO-1449 submitted with this IDS be provided in the next official communication.

Drawings

Figures 24-27 are objected to for not containing a legend, such as --Prior Art--. These drawings have been amended to include the label "Prior Art". Accordingly, Applicant requests that this objection be withdrawn.

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Docket No. 1232-4676***Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103***

Claims 1-3, 7, 9-11, 13-14, 17-19, 23, 25-27, 29-30 and 33-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,371,613 to Arimoto et al. ("Arimoto") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,072,912 to Orito ("Orito"). Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

The claims of the present application recite features involving the separate output of image signals of a plurality of divided areas from a plurality of output terminals respectively corresponding to the plurality of divided areas. Each of these divided areas have a plurality of photoreceptive pixels,. Such features, owing to difference in characteristics of the respective output terminals, may cause the occurrence of level gaps between image signals output from different output terminals. Embodiments of the present invention may advantageously reduce the signal level differences between image signals output from output terminals so as to make the border/borders between the plurality of divided areas inconspicuous in an image.

As indicated by the Examiner, Arimoto fails to disclose an image sensor which separately outputs image signals of a plurality of divided areas from a plurality of output terminals respectively corresponding to the plurality of divided areas.

The Examiner alleges that Orito discloses separately outputting image signals of a plurality of divided areas from a plurality of output terminals. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Orito involves an image scanner coupled to a host computer. The image scanner sends to the host computer white level data, black level data, and tone data. The host computer then corrects the tone data. However, Orito fails to teach a plurality of separately outputted image signals of a plurality of divided areas. Rather, Orito discloses an image scanner having 1648 charge coupled devices (CCDs) that are output by a single DMA controller 74.

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The Examiner asserts that Orito discloses the aforementioned claimed features in Figures 8 and 9. However, these portions of Orito merely show memories, not output terminals, for storing the eight sets of white level data obtained by eight times of scanning operations and nothing to do with the operation of outputting the signals from an image sensor 54.

Orito defines 1WA1, 2WA1, etc. in column 7, lines 49-54. According to Orito, the first "1" in "1WA1", for instance, indicates a 1st scanning operation, "WA" indicates white level data, and the last "1" in "1WA1" indicates a first CCD. Further, Orito describes that image sensor 54 produces eight sets of white level data in eight scanning operations, and each set includes 1648 pieces of white level data produced by the first through 1648th pixels. However, image sensor 54 does not output image signals of a plurality of divided areas from a plurality of output terminals which respectively correspond to the plurality of divided areas.

Accordingly, Arimoto and Orito fail to teach or suggest the claimed features of the present invention. Therefore, Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn,

The Examiner applies additional references to make the following rejections of various dependent claims under 35 U.S.C. §103:

1. Claims 4-5 and 20-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Arimoto in view of Orito and U.S. Patent No. 5,526,048 to Yamamoto ("Yamamoto");
2. Claims 6, 12, 22, and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Arimoto in view of Orito and U.S. Patent No. 5,644,409 to Irie et al. ("Irie");
3. Claims 8 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Arimoto in view of Orito, Irie, and U.S. Patent No. 5,457,547 to Yamada ("Yamada");
4. Claims 15-16 and 31-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Arimoto in view of Orito and U.S. Patent No. 5,960,110 to Usami ("Usami");

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5. Claims 42-43, 47, 56, 67-68, 72, and 81 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Arimoto in view of Orito, Douglass, Sawada, and Irie; and

6. Claims 59, 61, and 84 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Arimoto in view of Orito, Douglass, Sawada, and Usami.

However, these additional references do not overcome the aforementioned deficiencies of Arimoto and Orito. Therefore, Applicant requests that these rejections be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims and allowance of this application.

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Docket No. 1232-4676**AUTHORIZATION**

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4676.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4676.

Respectfully submitted,
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